

Message Text

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SUBJECT: US STRETCH FORM PRESS TO USSR -- IL 1081

REF: PARIS 15168

1. FOLLOWING IS OUR TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT REQUESTED IN PARA
2 OF REFTEL. PARA 2 BELOW STATES OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE
ACB-LOIRE PRESSES BASED ON THE FRENCH RESPONSE TO OUR
SEVERAL PROBINGS AS TO WHAT IS ENCOMPASSED IN THE LOIRE
TRANSACTION. WITH SOME OVERLAPPINGS, THESE EQUATE WITH
PARA 3 IN REFTEL AS FOLLOWS: (I) WITH (A); (II) WITH
(B) AND (C); (III) WITH (D); AND (IV) WITH (C).

2. CONTINUING US EFFORTS TO EXTRACT A DEFINITIVE FRENCH
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACB PRESSES ALLEGED TO BE DESTINED FOR
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DELIVERY TO THE SOVIET UNION AERO INDUSTRY HAVE YIELDED
THE FOLLOWING PERTINENT INFORMATION (SEE PARIS 34016,
PARIS 10111 AND OTHERS):

(I) THE FRENCH FIRM ACB COMPANY HAS RECEIVED AN
ORDER FOR NINE PRESSES FROM THE SOVIETS FOR
AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY USE;

(II) THE FRENCH STATE THAT THE NINE MACHINES ARE NOT
SPECIFICALLY MADE TO THE AERO INDUSTRY NEEDS;

(III) THE MACHINES ARE GENERICALLY A TYPE OF VERTICAL HYDRAULIC PRESS AND NOT OF THE IL 1081 CATEGORY;
AND

(IV) THE FRENCH BELIEVE THEIR MACHINES ARE NOT EMBARGOED.

3. OUR TECHNICAL ANALYSIS OF THE INFORMATION THE FRENCH HAVE SUPPLIED, EXPRESSLY WITHOUT REGARD TO CYRIL BATH ALLEGATIONS OF FRENCH ACTIVITY, YIELDS ONLY ONE CONCLUSION: THE FRENCH HAVE CONTRACTED WITH THE SOVIETS TO SUPPLY GENERAL PURPOSE VERTICAL PRESSES. SUCH PRESSES COULD BE EXPORTED FROM THE US AS UNEMBARGOED EQUIPMENT AND THAT EXPORTS WOULD HAVE LITTLE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE US APPLICANT, CYRIL BATH, ALLEGES THAT ITS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE SOVIET PURCHASING OFFICIALS AND A TRADE LETTER FROM THE ACB COMPANY (STATED TO BE IN ERROR BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT) CLEARLY INDICATE A SOVIET/FRENCH CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY TO THE SOVIET AERO INDUSTRY OF NINE STRETCH FORMING SYSTEMS MEETING THE KAMA PURCHASING COMMISSION ASSIGNMENT NUMBERS N4011, N4012, N4013 AND N4014. EACH ASSIGNMENT, CONFIDENTIAL

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EXCEPT N4014 AWARDED TO CYRIL BATH, COVERS THREE "STRETCH FORMING MACHINES" AND THREE "BRIDGE TYPE VERTICAL HYDRAULIC PRESSES." THE BRIDGE PRESSES ARE INTEGRATED WITH THE STRETCH FORMING MACHINES, ONE TO ONE, TO FORM NINE FORMING SYSTEMS. A TENTH SYSTEM IS THE CYRIL BATH VERTICAL DOUBLE WING STRETCH WRAP PRESS.

5. IF THE CYRIL BATH STATEMENTS AND THE ACB LETTER ARE ACCEPTED AS BEING TRUE THEN THE FRENCH WOULD BE SUPPLYING THE SOVIETS A HUGE PRODUCTION CAPACITY EXCLUSIVELY EMPLOYED IN THE AEROSPACE INDUSTRY. THE MAGNITUDE OF THE EXPORT AT A MINIMUM MUST SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTE TO AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION, BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY. THIS QUANTITY OF MACHINES IN A SINGLE TRANSACTION REPRESENTS APPROXIMATELY 25 OF TOTAL US DOD INVENTORY OF STRETCH FORMING MACHINES.

6. THE NINE SYSTEMS OF ASSIGNMENTS N4011 - N4013 ARE FOR A TRANSVERSE TYPE MACHINE UTILIZING LOWER DIE TABLE THRUST AGAINST A PRESTRESSED SHEET OF MATERIAL TO FORCE THE METAL TO CONFORM TO A LOWER MALE DIE. THE UPPER BRIDGE STRUCTURE ALLOWS THE PRESSING OF A FEMALE DIE AGAINST THE MATERIAL IN OPPOSITION TO THE DIE TABLE FOR MAKING CONCAVE IMPRESSIONS, IF REQUIRED, IN THE PART UNDER CONSTRUCTION. THE TRANSVERSE TYPE MACHINE IS

ACTUALLY A COMBINED VERTICAL HYDRAULIC PRESS WITH

TRANSLATIONAL ACTUATED STRETCHER UNITS. THIS MACHINE TYPE COULD NOT NORMALLY FORM HONEYCOMB BECAUSE IT CANNOT PROVIDE FOR THE NEUTRAL BEND AXIS ADJUSTMENTS NECESSARY TO AVOID THE CRUSHING OF A DOUBLE SKIN PLATE ASSEMBLY.

7. THE CYRIL BATH PRESS IS A STRETCH WRAP MACHINE WHICH OPERATES IN A MANNER DIFFERING FROM THE TRANSVERSE MACHINE. ESSENTIALLY, THE MACHINE STRETCHER
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UNITS PRESTRESS A SHEET OF MATERIAL AND THEN ACTUALLY MOVE IN A COMBINED ROTARY AND TRANSLATIONAL PATH TO WRAP THE SHEET ABOUT A STATIONARY DIE. REMEMBER IN THE CASE OF THE TRANSVERSE PRESS THE STRETCHER UNITS REMAIN STATIONARY AND THE DIE TABLE MOVES. THE STRETCH WRAP PRESS, IF EQUIPPED WITH PROPER GRIPPER JAWS, FORM HONEYCOMB. IT IS SEEN THAT THE CYRIL BATH (STRETCH WRAP) PRESS IS SOMEWHAT MORE CAPABLE THAN THE TRANSVERSE UNIT, AND BECAUSE OF THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES EMPLOYED A TRANSVERSE MACHINE COULD NOT BE MODIFIED TO UPGRADE ITS OPERATION TO THAT OF THE STRETCH WRAP MACHINE. (THIS PARAGRAPH ADDRESS THE MECHANICAL-HYDRAULIC DIFFERENCES, AS SPELLED OUT IN PARA 3(D) OF REFTTEL, BETWEEN WHAT WE PERCEIVE AS THE FRENCH TRANSVERSE PRESS AND THE CYRIL BATH STRETCH WRAP PRESS.)

8. A QUANTITY OF 10 MACHINES (NINE FRENCH AND ONE CYRIL BATH) REPRESENTS A TREMENDOUS PRODUCTION CAPACITY. THE US APPLICANT SO FAR HAS BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN SOVIET IDENTIFICATION OF THE LOCATION(S) FOR FINAL INSTALLATION OF THE MACHINES. IT APPEARS TO US THAT THE MACHINES MOST LIKELY WILL NOT ALL BE LOCATED AT A SINGLE SITE, DESPITE THE SOVIET PENCHANT FOR VAST PRODUCTION COMPLEXES, BUT RATHER WILL BE INSTALLED IN SEVERAL SEPARATE FACILITIES. STRETCH PRESS OPERATION DOES NOT DEPEND ON OTHER PRESSES FOR MULTIPLE FORMING ACTIONS, AS USED IN CONVENTIONAL HAMMER OR PRESS BRAKE PROCESSING. ONE ADVANTAGE TO STRETCH FORMING IS THE PROCESS REDUCTION TO A SINGLE OPERATION FOLLOWED BY MATERIAL HEAT TREAT. INDEED, IN ALUMINUM SKIN FORMING THE OPERATION MUST BE SUPPORTED BY VERY LARGE, IN TERMS OF PART ENVELOPE DIMENSIONS, OF HEAT TREAT FACILITIES TO BRING THE MATERIAL TO THE DESIRED STRENGTH. -
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9. IT MUST BE NOTED THAT BOTH THE TRANSVERSE AND STRETCH WRAP PRESS DESIGNS ORIGINATED IN THE 1930'S AND WERE EMPLOYED IN THE 1940'S. THE SUBJECT MECHANICAL/HYDRAULIC

SYSTEMS DIFFER LITTLE FROM THEIR PREDECESSORS. THE TYPE OF CONTROL SYSTEMS TO BE SUPPLIED WITH THE NINE FRENCH TRANSVERSE STRETCH FORMING SYSTEMS IS UNKNOWN. THE CONTROLS USED WITH THE CYRIL BATH MACHINE IS A CONVENTIONAL ELECTRO/MECHANICAL TYPE REQUIRING OPERATOR MANUAL INITIATION AND ACTUATION. IN ANY EVENT, REGARDLESS OF THE TYPE OF CONTROL SUPPLIED WITH EITHER THE FRENCH OR CYRIL BATH PRESS, THESE STRETCH FORMING SYSTEMS ARE EXCLUSIVELY USED IN THE AERO INDUSTRY. THE CONTROL MAKES NO DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN END-USE APPLICATIONS.

10. RE QUESTIONS IN PARA 4 OF REFTTEL: (A) WHAT TECHNICAL FACTS THE FRENCH HAVE SO FAR GIVEN US ARE NOT RELEVANT TO ESTABLISHING WHETHER THE ACB-LOIRE PRESSES ARE EMBARGOED BY 1081. THEY HAVE SKILLFULLY SKIRTED AROUND THE 1081 DEFINITION, INDICATING BY COMPARISON WITH THE CYRIL BATH PRESS WHAT THE ACB'S DO NOT HAVE OR CANNOT DO. THEY HAVE NOT CATEGORICALLY STATED THAT THE ACB'S CANNOT WORK OR FORM AIRCRAFT SHEET, PLATE, OR EXTRUSION. (B) THE FACT THAT THE ACB PRESSES DO NOT CONTAIN HELICOIDAL RAMPS IS NOT NECESSARILY RELEVANT TO 1081 COVERAGE. THESE RAMPS ARE NECESSARY FOR FORMING HONEYCOMB (OR STRESSKIN) WHICH IS A FORM OF AIRCRAFT SHEET, PLATE OR EXTRUSION. THE 1081 DEFINITION COVERS EQUIPMENT SPECIALLY DESIGNED TO SHAPE, FORM OR EXTRUDE ALL FORMS OF AIRCRAFT SKIN.

11) RE ITEM (E) IN PARA 3 OF REFTTEL: THE FRENCH ARE APPARENTLY POINTING OUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CYRIL BATH PRESS AND A TRANSVERSE STRETCH PRESS SUCH AS WE DEDUCE THE ACB'S TO BE. BRIDGE MECHANISMS ARE USED ONLY WITH TRANSVERSE PRESSES. IT IS AN ACCESSORY AND IS NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF A TRANSVERSE STRETCH PRESS; THE ADDITION OF THE BRIDGE GIVES THAT TRANSVERSE PRESS ADDED CAPABILITY. THE FRENCH MAY 2 QUESTIONS RE JAW OPENINGS AND HELICOIDAL RAMPS WERE ANSWERED IN STATE 117003 (THE "SPECIAL GEOMETRIC PATH" MENTIONED IN THAT TELEGRAM PERTAINS TO HELICOIDAL RAMPS).

12) IN SUMMARY, WE STILL NOT SURE OF WHAT THE ACB TRANS-ACTION ENTAILS. BASED STRICTLY ON WHAT THE FRENCH HAVE TOLD US WE WOULD HAVE TO CONCLUDE THAT THE ACB'S ARE UNEMBARGOED GENERAL PURPOSE VERTICAL PRESSES AND, THEREFORE, NOT COMPARABLE TO THE CYRIL BATH MACHINE. BASED, HOWEVER, ON ALL THE DATA WE HAVE AMASSED -- FACTUAL, TECHNICAL AND CONCLUSORY -- OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE ACB'S ARE COMPARABLE TO THE CYRIL BATH PRESS IN THAT BOTH: (I) STRETCH FORM AIRCRAFT SKIN AS DEFINED IN 1081; (II) ARE PRIMARILY USED IN THE AERO INDUSTRY; BUT (III) CONCEIVABLY CAN BE USED TO STRETCH FORM OTHER OBJECTS MADE

FROM THE METAL SHEETS. THE CYRIL BATH PRESS, HOWEVER, CAN, IN ADDITION, WORK HONEYCOMB, ALBEIT THAT FUNCTION WOULD BE CHANCY GIVEN THE SIZE OF ITS JAW OPENINGS. BASED ON OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ACB PRESSES, THIS LAST CYRIL BATH FEATURE IS LACKING IN THE LOIRE PRESSES. ON BALANCE, WE CONCLUDE THAT COMPARABILITY EXISTS BETWEEN THE CYRIL BATH AND ACB PRESSES, THE ADDED HONEYCOMB FEATURE OF THE FORMER NOTWITHSTANDING, AND THE EXPORT OF BOTH TO THE USSR WOULD MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE MILITARY CAPABILITY OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE IMPACT OF THE ACB'S BEING GREATER GIVEN THE NUMBER INVOLVED.

13. RE PARA 5 REFTTEL, TECHNICIANS HERE BELIEVE WE ARE DEPENDENT UPON RECEIPT OF PICTURES, BROCHURES, BLUEPRINTS, CONFIDENTIAL

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OR SPECIFICATIONS TO DETERMINE THE STATUS OF FRENCH PRESSES RE 1081 AND THAT NO QUESTION ON A SPECIFIC DETAIL WOULD BE ADEQUATE FOR THIS PURPOSE.

14. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE HIGH LEVEL EMBASSY USDEL BILATERAL APPROACH TO THE FRENCH SHOULD ONCE AGAIN SEEK PICTURES, BROCHURES, BLUEPRINTS, AND/OR SPECIFICATIONS.

15. ANY OF THE ABOVE INFORMATION MAY BE USED IN THIS APPROACH OR IN ANSWERING QUESTIONS IN THE COMMITTEE. HOWEVER, WE SUGGEST THAT THE USDEL NOT VOLUNTEER A DOCUMENT TO THE COMMITTEE ALONG THESE LINES AT THIS TIME. ANOTHER U.S. INITIATIVE IN THE COMMITTEE MIGHT STAND IN THE WAY OF OBTAINING FINAL VIEWS FROM OTHER COCOM MEMBERS, WHICH WE HOPE CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED ASAP, PERHAPS MAY 23. VANCE

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